

News from Ed Markey

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WHILE THE U.S. ‘SLEEPS’ ON THE U.N. REPORT, WILL U.S. PRISONERS GET SHIPPED TO SYRIA?

***Bush Administration continues to stonewall request for
accounting of “extraordinary renditions” to Syria***

WASHINGTON, DC- A United Nations (U.N.) investigation released today implicates Syrian and Lebanese officials in the murder of reformer and former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. The Bush Administration’s Ambassador to the U.N., John R. Bolton, has said the U.S. will not immediately comment on the report, "We intend to read and study it tonight very carefully and decide tomorrow in consultations with other interested governments what the next steps will be." While U.S. officials plot a response to the new information, Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA) called on the U.S. to end the diplomatic practice of sending U.S. prisoners into the care of Syrian officials, and to provide a full and complete accounting of the role of our own country in soliciting Syria’s assistance in the “extraordinary rendition” of detainees from U.S. to Syrian custody for interrogation.

“Syrian officials are implicated for abuse of power and interfering in the sovereignty of Lebanon, why is the U.S. government entrusting them with our terrorist suspects?” said **Rep. Markey**, the author of the Torture Outsourcing Prevention Act (H. R. 952). Syria is among numerous countries that receive U.S. prisoners as part of the Central Intelligence Agency’s (CIA) program on extraordinary rendition, which expedites U.S. terrorist suspects to a network of prisons around the world to be detained and questioned. **Rep. Markey**, an opponent of sending prisoners to countries to be tortured and detained, asked, “How many U.S. prisoners is Syria holding right now? Are we going to halt the Gulf Stream until we know the full details of Syria’s involvement in the killing of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri? Are we going to ask Syria politely to give our terrorist suspects back? How will our ‘diplomatic assurances’ from Syria hold up when our diplomatic relations have broken down?”

“The practice of sending our prisoners into the hands of known torturers like Syria is wrong and must be stopped. The information revealed by the U.N. report raises serious questions about Syria’s commitment to the rule of law and the sovereignty of other nations. The U.S. will be judged by other nations by the friends that we keep,” said **Rep. Markey**.